

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 H-02 SSM-05 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 USIE-00
INRE-00 /063 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. BROWN (INFO)
H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MS. GRIFFIN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH

-----271659Z 069962 /65

O 271607Z JAN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
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AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
USCINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JANUARY 26

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JANUARY 26,
1977:

Q. HAS THE U.S. BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT
CONCERNING THE MOVEMENT OF PEACEKEEPING FORCES INTO THE
SOUTHERN PART OF LEBANON?

A. YES, WE HAVE. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE SYRIAN
GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS THE ISRAELI AND LEBANESE
GOVERNMENTS.

Q. WITH A VIEW TO DOING WHAT? WHAT IS THE POINT OF YOUR
BEING IN TOUCH?
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A. AS YOU KNOW, AS WE SAID BEFORE, WE CONTINUE TO WATCH
THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON CLOSELY. AND WE HAVE
ALSO SAID THAT WE BELIEVE WE CAN BE OF USE TO THE
GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED IN HELPING THEM UNDERSTAND EACH
OTHER'S CONCERNS ABOUT THIS SENSITIVE AREA. AS I HAVE JUST

SAID, I CAN CONFIRM THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH THROUGH
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH THE GOVERNMENTS OF SYRIA,
LEBANON AND ISRAEL.

Q. DID YOU TRANSMIT A WARNING FROM ISRAEL TO THE SYRIANS
THAT THEY HAVE NOW APPROACHED THE LIMITS OF THE RED LINE,
SO-CALLED?

A. I AM NOT GOING TO DESCRIBE OUR CONTACTS AS TRANSMITTING
WARNINGS. I WILL JUST LET IT STAND AS I HAVE SAID, THAT
WE THINK WE CAN BE MOST HELPFUL BY MAKING SURE THAT THE
GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW

WE ARE NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF TRANSMITTING WARNINGS.

Q. YOU HAVE USED ALMOST THE IDENTICAL LANGUAGE FROM THIS PODIUM FOR SEVERAL MONTHS NOW. BUT THERE IS A NEW FACTOR NOW, AND THAT IS THE MOVEMENT OF THE PEACEKEEPING FORCES INTO TWO CITIES WITHIN TEN MILES OF THE ISRAELI BORDER THAT THEY HAVEN'T BEEN IN BEFORE.

DO YOU HAVE A VIEW OF THE MOVEMENT OF THESE FORCES INTO THE SOUTHERN PART OF LEBANON? IS THERE A NEW URGENCY ABOUT THE PROBLEM? HOW DO YOU SEE IT? THE LANGUAGE IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME.

A. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS HAS MOVED A LIMITED NUMBER OF ARAB DETERRENT FORCES INTO THE VICINITY OF THE TOWN OF NABATIYAH--

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Q. A NUMBER OF WHAT KIND OF FORCES?

A. ARAB DETERRENT FORCES --

Q. ARAB DETERRENT FORCES.

A. -- IN HIS CONTINUING EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A CENTRAL AUTHORITY AND CONTROL IN LEBANON.

Q. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THESE DETERRENT ARAB FORCES? ARE THESE LEBANESE, SYRIAN?

A. JUST LET ME FINISH. THE FORCES, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, ARE PREDOMINANTLY SYRIAN, BUT THEY ARE UNDER THE COMMAND OF PRESIDENT SARKIS AND IN LINE WITH THE ARAB SUMMIT AGREEMENTS AT RIYADH AND CAIRO. SO I THINK THAT ADDRESSES YOUR QUESTION.

Q. YOU HAVEN'T MADE IT CLEAR WHAT THE POSITION OF THE

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS ON THE MOVEMENT OF THESE ARAB SECURITY FORCES INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON. IS THERE A POSITION?

A. OUR POSITION IS AS I STATED IT AT THE BEGINNING, NAMELY THAT WE ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION CLOSELY, AS WE HAVE BEEN IN RECENT MONTHS.

Q. IS THIS A HELPFUL MOVE?

A. I DO NOT WANT TO USE AN ADJECTIVE TO DESCRIBE IT. I

WOULD SIMPLY REFER YOU TO WHAT I SAID WITH REGARD TO
PRESIDENT SARKIS AS PRESIDENT OF LEBANON ESTABLISHING HIS
CENTRAL AUTHORITY AND SECURITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

Q. IS IT THE VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES THAT THIS CHANGES
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THE SITUATION IN ANY WAY?

A. I WOULD NOT WANT TO SAY THAT IT CHANGES THE SITUATION.

Q. YOUR LANGUAGE SUGGESTS THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
DOES NOT VIEW WITH ANY CONCERN THIS MOVEMENT. YOU USE
THE EXPRESSION "ARAB DETERRENT FORCES." "DETERRENT" WOULD
HAVE MORE THAN A NORMAL DESCRIPTIVE MEANING HERE. IT
WOULD SEEM TO HAVE A POLITICAL MEANING.

A. THAT SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THE ACCEPTED NAMES BY WHICH
THE ARAB FORCES IN LEBANON ARE KNOWN. IT IS
USED TO DESCRIBE THESE FORCES.

Q. EXCUSE ME, YOU ALSO STRESSED THAT WHILE THESE
FORCES ARE PREDOMINANTLY SYRIAN, YOU STRESSED THAT THEY
ARE UNDER THE COMMAND OF PRESIDENT SARKIS.

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. DO YOU MEAN TO INFER THAT THE UNITED STATES DOES
NOT VIEW WITH CONCERN THIS DEVELOPMENT?

A. I AM NOT IMPLYING ANYTHING. I AM JUST GOING TO
STAND ON WHAT I SAID WITH REGARD TO THE MOVEMENT OF THESE
FORCES, AND NOT CHARACTERIZE THEM OR DESCRIBE THEM OR OUR
REACTION TO THIS EVENT IN ANY OTHER FASHION.

Q. ISN'T IT THE AMERICAN POSITION OR HASN'T IT BEEN,
THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE SARKIS DEVELOP A LEBANESE ARMY
FOR PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS IN THAT PART OF LEBANON?
IF THAT IS TRUE, DOESN'T THIS FLY IN THE FACE OF THAT

A. I WOULD NOT BUY THAT PART OF YOUR PROPOSITION. I
WOULD HAVE TO CHECK TO SEE WHAT WE HAVE SAID SPECIFICALLY
WITH REGARD TO THE CREATION OF A LEBANESE MILITARY FORCE.
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BUT IF MY MEMORY IS CORRECT, WE HAVE SAID THAT WE SUPPORT

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH AN ARMED FORCE.

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 27-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
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Review Release Date: n/a
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